COMMUNITY

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Grand Marshal of the
Cinco de Mayo Parade 2026

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

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SPORTS

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Louisville City FC, 2 - 1

¡Risas por doquier al celebrar en Detroit el Cinco de Mayo!

Por el personal de EL CENTRAL

El clima estuvo perfecto, al igual que el ánimo festivo de las miles de personas que disfrutaron del 61° desfile del Cinco de Mayo en Southwest Detroit el domingo 3 de mayo. Patrocinado por el Mexican Patriotic Committee, el desfile y la fiesta, que se llevaron a cabo tanto el sábado como el domingo, transcurrieron de manera casi impecable. Las festividades, en todo su esplendor, fueron un testimonio de la resiliencia de un pueblo que ha enfrentado tiempos difíciles durante el último año, pero que sigue orgulloso de su historia y su rica cultura.

El tema de las festividades de este año fue Estamos Unidos, y el concepto simbolizó con audacia una actitud inclusiva y acogedora que celebra la diversidad de Southwest Detroit. La comunidad salió con gusto y defendió las diversas culturas estadounidenses e inmigrantes que hacen de nuestra comunidad

Members of Ballet Folklorico, a Mexican folk dance group, walk down Vernor Highway as a part of the 61st annual Cinco de Mayo parade. Photo by Adam J. Dewey.

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Smiles Abound as Detroit Celebrates Cinco de Mayo!

By EL CENTRAL Staff

The weather was perfect and so was the upbeat mood of the thousands of people who enjoyed the 61st Cinco de Mayo Parade in Southwest Detroit on Sunday, May 3rd. Sponsored by the Mexican Patriotic Committee, the parade and fiesta, which was held on both Saturday and Sunday, went off nearly flawlessly. The festivities, in all their glory, were a testament to the resilience of a people who have seen troubled times over the past year, but who remain proud of their history and their rich culture.

The theme for this year's festivities was Estamos Unidos (We Are United), and the concept boldly symbolized an inclusive and welcoming attitude which celebrates the diversity of Southwest Detroit. The community gladly came out and stood up for the diverse American and immigrant cultures that make our community the

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With a Legendary Juror, 'Trabajadores' Show Connects Art, Labor, Latino Identity

By Isabelle Tavares for Planet Detroit – Reprinted with permission | Photos by Brayan Gutierrez for El Central / MexicantownCDC

An art show which opened last Friday, May 1 in Southwest Detroit seeks to celebrate the "people who make the world turn."

"Trabajadores," a Spanish term for workers, is an exhibition co-organized by the Mexicantown Community Development Corporation (MCDC) and Dalia Reyes, an independent curator and interdisciplinary artist with over 20 years of experience, to highlight Latino workers who are often behind the scenes, but integral to daily life, she said.

Painter Nora Chapa Mendoza juried the show. She is a 2024 Kresge Eminent Artist and her work on migrant laborers and Chicano identity is featured in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art.

Mendoza, 94, was born to Mexican parents in Weslaco, Texas and moved in 1953 to Michigan, where she has lived in the Metro Detroit area since.

Community members gathered at La Galería for the opening reception of WORKERS! | TRABAJADORES!, an exhibition celebrating labor and collective power. Juried by Nora Chapa Mendoza.

While living in Highland Park during segregation, she said she was inspired by Black artists carving a space for themselves but felt like the "brown got lost in the middle," referring to Latinos.

Mendoza said her work, and this show, is a way to bring attention to Hispanic artists.

"This was a way to make the Hispanic people proud of themselves, what they do, where they came from, and why you eat their food," Mendoza said with a laugh.

How 'Trabajadores' developed

"Trabajadores" was originally a show to celebrate labor rights icon Cesar Chavez, showcasing a gallery of reproductions of archival photos of Chavez assembled by journalist Martina Guzman.

When allegations the United Farm Workers (UFW) co-founder groomed and abused girls for years were reported, Reyes said she, Guzman, and La Galería "had to pivot really, really fast. We were all very shocked."

The focus shifted to a broader exhibition on workers, from construction laborers to healers and farmworkers.

La Galería wasn't just a location for the show, Reyes said, and was integral in uplifting "our gente" after the "awful" Chavez news, she said. "Trabajadores" will be an annual show, and an

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Smiles Abound as Detroit Celebrates Cinco de Mayo!

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rich cultural home for proud residents, local businesses and service providers.

The Mexican Patriotic Committee estimates that approximately 8,000 people lined up along the 2.4 mile parade route on W Vernor Hwy, from Patton Park to Clark Park. Alma Cruz, president of the Comite, reported that the parade attracted 99 registered participants (from local businesses, schools, folkloric dance groups, nonprofits and civic leaders) – a 35 percent increase over last year's participants. In addition, the 2026 parade had 130 registered vehicles – up from last year's total, as well.

This year, the parade was led by Grand Marshal Jesse Gonzales, Sr., who was accompanied by the vibrant sounds of the Harper Woods High School Marching Band.

The Fiesta was held on the grounds of Patton Recreation Center near the start of the parade and attracted approximately 500 people over the two days. There, attendees enjoyed scrumptious treats served by food truck vendors, along with several commercial vendors marketing their ethnic foods and products and resource tables sharing important information with attendees. Fiesta entertainment was provided by Grupo Ekilibriow, Grupo Reti, Grupo Autonomo and Grupo Primazos.

"For many years, the Mexican Patriotic Committee has poured its heart into this Parade, guided by a deep love for our culture and our people," Cruz said. "It fills us with joy to see our community line the streets, gathering freely and proudly in a space where they feel safe to celebrate who they are. We will keep doing this work — for our heritage, for our community, and for every generation still to come."

Please turn to pages 8 and 9 for more photos of the parade while fiesta photos can be found below and at www.elcentralmedia.com.

Fiesta photos by Luciana Vega

¡Risas por doquier al celebrar en Detroit el Cinco de Mayo!

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el hogar cultural de residentes orgullosos, negocios locales y proveedores de servicios.

El Mexican Patriotic Committee estima que aproximadamente 8,000 personas se alinearon a lo largo de la ruta de 2.4 millas del desfile en W Vernor Hwy, desde Patton Park hasta Clark Park. Alma Cruz, presidenta del Comité, informó que el desfile atrajo a 99 participantes registrados (entre negocios locales, escuelas, grupos de danza folclórica, organizaciones sin fines de lucro y líderes cívicos), lo que representa un aumento del 35 por ciento respecto a los participantes del año pasado. Además, el desfile de 2026 contó con 130 vehículos registrados, superando también el total del año anterior.

Este año, el desfile fue encabezado por el Grand Marshal Jesse Gonzales, Sr., quien estuvo acompañado por los vibrantes sonidos de la Harper Woods High School Marching Band.

La Fiesta se celebró en los terrenos del Patton Recreation Center, cerca del inicio del desfile, y atrajo a unas 500 personas durante los dos días. Allí, los asistentes disfrutaron de deliciosos antojos servidos por vendedores de food trucks, junto con varios vendedores comerciales que ofrecían su comida y productos étnicos, además de mesas de recursos que compartieron información importante con los asistentes. El entretenimiento de la Fiesta estuvo a cargo de Grupo Ekilibriow, Grupo Reti, Grupo Autónomo y Grupo Primazos.

"Durante muchos años, el Mexican Patriotic Committee ha puesto todo su corazón en este desfile, guiado por un profundo amor por nuestra cultura y nuestra gente", expresó Cruz. "Nos llena de alegría ver a nuestra comunidad llenar las calles, reuniéndose libre y orgullosamente en un espacio donde se sienten seguros para celebrar quiénes son. Seguiremos realizando este trabajo: por nuestra herencia, por nuestra comunidad y por cada generación venidera".

Por favor, consulten las páginas 8 y 9 para ver más fotos del desfile; las fotos de la fiesta se pueden encontrar encima y en www.elcentralmedia.com.

De la oficina del Tesorero del Condado de Wayne,
Eric R. Sabree

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With a Legendary Juror, 'Trabajadores' Show Connects Art, Labor, Latino Identity

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Gallery opening reception photos by Brayan Gutierrez

opportunity to "turn something beautiful from something bleak," she said.

Dalia Rayes, curator, and Nora Chapa Mendoza, juror, at the opening of WORKERS! | TRABAJADORES! on May 1st at La Galería.

Reyes brought in Mendoza for her storied work on the labor movement – some of her paintings were commissioned by Chavez in 1986 to become UFW greeting cards – and civil rights themes in her paintings, ranging in style from abstraction to realism.

The show opens the gallery doors to artists like Alberto Ramirez and Vidal Perez, who said they were inspired by Mendoza, and paint in the winter down season from their construction day jobs.

"It's beautiful to see that it created an opportunity and inspired people that could never see themselves in a gallery," Reyes said.

Perez presented a painting titled "The Tlachiquero," a term used for a person who harvests agave, depicting a man in a thick agave field. The painting brings to life a childhood memory of drinking the sap from the plant, Perez said.

Ramirez, who leads ceremonies and Aztec dances, showed a violet painting of a grandmother holding a child's head during a ceremony, which Mendoza wanted in the show, as she sees ceremonies as work, too, she said.

Reyes said exhibitions like "Trabajadores" are inclusive.

"Sometimes with art and exhibitions, it could have a pretentious air to it, where they feel like they're not welcomed," Reyes said. "Detroit does a really good job of offering artists opportunities."

Ramirez said the show is meaningful because although he makes a living in construction, he said the show is a way to expose his "true way of living" as an artist and a ceremonial leader.

The Trabajadores exhibition runs through May 28 at La Galería, a community art space run by the Mexicantown CDC at 2835 Bagley St.

Community members gathered at La Galería for the opening reception of WORKERS! | TRABAJADORES!, an exhibition celebrating labor and collective power. Juried by Nora Chapa Mendoza.

La Galería hours | Horario de Visita

Monday | Lunes: closed - cerrado
Tuesday-Thursday | Martes-Jueves: 3:30-6:30pm
Wednesday-Friday: By appointment only (12-4pm) 313-626-6232
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Isabelle Tavares covers environmental and public health impacts in Southwest Detroit for Planet Detroit with Report for America. Working in text, film and audio, she is a Dominican-American storyteller who is concerned with identity, generational time, and ecology.

The painter Alberto Ramirez also works in construction and leads ceremonies and Aztec dances. Photo by Isabelle Tavares/Planet Detroit.

Vidal Perez took up painting eight years ago during the construction down season in the winter after being inspired by 94-year-old painter Nora Chapa Mendoza. Photo by Isabelle Tavares/Planet Detroit.

Celebrate Mom & Kick Off the Season at the 2026 Mother's Day Market

Lincoln Park, MI, May 4, 2026 – The countdown to market season begins with a special celebration for the whole community. The Lincoln Park Farmers Market is excited to announce its Mother's Day Market, taking place on Sunday, May 10, 2026, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM at 'Mellus Park', 1661 Fort Street, Lincoln Park.

This one-day spring market is the perfect opportunity to find thoughtful, locally made gifts just in time for Mother's Day while supporting small businesses and local growers. Visitors can browse a selection of vendors featuring fresh plants, baked goods, specialty foods, artisan crafts, and unique handmade items.

"This event is all about celebrating moms while also celebrating our local makers and growers," said Fred Wilson Jr., President of Friends of Lincoln Park Farmers Market who puts on the Lincoln Park Farmers Market. "It's a great way to shop small and enjoy a relaxed, welcoming community atmosphere," said Fred Wilson Jr.

The Mother's Day Market also marks the official kickoff to the 2026 market season, which opens on Sunday, June 7, 2026, and continues weekly Sundays through the season. This year, the market will operate with new hours of 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM, making it even easier for families and visitors to attend.

Now entering its 20th season, the Lincoln Park Farmers Market remains a proud volunteer-run nonprofit organization, dedicated to supporting local agriculture, local foods and small businesses in the community. The market continues to grow thanks to the dedication of volunteers, vendors, and community supporters.

Vendor applications for the 2026 season are still being accepted, including local farmers, specialty food producers, artists, and crafters.

For more information, vendor applications, or sponsorship opportunities, please visit https://www.lpfarmersmarket.org, email info@lpfarmersmarket.org or call 313-427-0443.

Luis Peña, a Lincoln Park Farmers Market Vendor.

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ENGLISH ESPAÑOL

Lansing Latino Legislative Advocacy Event Brings Labor Issues, Maternal Health Into Focus

By Ben Solis for Michigan Advance – Reprinted with permission

Participants in the Latino Legislative Advocacy Day in front of the State Capitol Building in Lansing, MI on April 30. Photo by Karen Cardenas, MiPoder.

In the basement of a church in downtown Lansing, members of Michigan's Latin community grappled with policy and bold ideas that could help them protect their civil rights and attain tangible political power statewide.

On Thursday, MI Poder, a nonprofit organization dedicated to amplifying Latinx grassroots efforts and justice-driven policy change, hosted its fourth-annual Latino Legislative Advocacy Day.

The event is part of MI Poder's Michigan Latino Voter Project, a statewide initiative seeking to expand Latin civic participation, build a sustained organizing infrastructure and see Latin or Latin-preferred candidates excel at the ballot box.

"This is about more than just participation, it's about real power," said Cindy Gamboa, executive director of MI Poder. "Our communities are already engaged. What's been missing is consistent investment and real accountability. Latino Legislative Advocacy Day is about closing that gap and making sure our voices don't just show up, but that they also guide decisions."

The day's events included meetings with legislators, breaking bread, sharing stories, and various panel discussions focused on ways to enhance political power but also to enhance the well-being of Latin people living in Michigan.

Of high interest were panels dealing with worker protections and Latina maternal health — especially at a time when Latin people are facing affronts to their dignity and other challenges, like increased immigration enforcement from the federal government. Not only have those challenges affected workers, but also the mental health of the community writ large.

Workers deserve a path toward documentation, stronger abuse protections

Discussing labor issues were Amanda Villa with the United Farm Workers Foundation's Michigan branch, Gonzalo Peralta with the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, and Branden Snyder of the Working Families Party.

Moderator Ernesto Mireles, also with MI Poder, at one point asked the panel about what needed to be done at the state legislative and congressional levels to ensure farmworkers, regardless of immigration status, could report unsafe conditions without fear of retaliation, job loss or deportation.

Villa said that a clear pathway to legal status and documentation would go a long way toward easing those fears of reprisal.

"We continue to be afraid," Villa said. "If I'm a lawful permanent resident and I don't want to speak out because my green card will be removed; if my parents are naturalized U.S. citizens, and they don't want to share their farmworking story because they're afraid they're going to be targeted the next time we go to Mexico; we need a legal path for our farmworkers and we need it now."

Villa also advocated for stronger protections against working in high-heat environments, as Michigan does not currently have a heat standard.

"Our farmworkers work in 90 degree weather with no form of acclimatization whatsoever," she said. "We're seeing these young farmworkers from Mexico come into Michigan, and they're expected to work 10 hours a day under the beating sun, with limited water, with limited shade, with limited rest, and then we expect them to go to work and do it again the next day, for seven days. That's not humanly possible."

Peralta said that although the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act does provide workers with a mechanism to issue complaints, it remains wholly insufficient to address the needs of Latin American or immigrant workers.

"Not even close. Part of the problem is that the agency which enforces that act is massively underfunded," Peralta said of the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or MIOSHA, which is housed within the state Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. "Part of the solution would be to actually give the funds necessary so that the agency can do its job to ensure that anyone who makes a complaint is actually appropriately investigated and employers are penalized if there are violations of law."

Peralta also noted that there were immediate ways, aside from appropriations, for the Michigan Legislature to increase protections already codified in the act. That was also true of MIOSHA, which does have the power to promulgate its own rules.

"I'm not sure why it's not doing that," Peralta said. "The intersection with its lack of funding means that they won't be able to actually do any enforcement, assuming that they were able to go through the rules making process. We need to deal with the fact that there are administrative and political legislative hurdles to being able to actually create and craft some legislative structure that allows for people to actually make complaints and to get some redress."

Michigan's laws also interact poorly with federal systems, he added, and that many states have adopted policies where immigrants are penalized for filing complaints that would better their workplaces and ensure their safety.

We need a legal path for our farmworkers and we need it now.
– Amanda Villa with the United Farm Workers Foundation's Michigan branch.

Snyder said Black and Latin farmworking communities first need to demand more from their lawmakers.

"How are we making sure that we are integrating these type of conversations in the everyday speak, in everyday demands of what we're asking our elected officials to do?" Snyder posited. "How do we 'electoralize' these issues that matter?"

Snyder also pointed to the fact that Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has put an emphasis on consumer protections, but her office could be doing more to enforce work protections. He also called on those units to be placed in local county prosecutors' offices to ensure other avenues to report companies or vendors for violations like wage theft.

Maternal health in the Latina community should also include mental health for all

Speaking on the topic of maternal health and challenges felt within the Latina community were Alé Roel, a community organizer with Mothering Justice, Celeste Sanchez Lloyd, a community program manager with Spectrum Health, Vilma Escamilla Duran, a doula and community activist.

Moderator Gladys Picó Gleason, a registered nurse and the clinical manager of Corewell Health's diagnostic lung mass clinic in Grand Rapids, quickly turned to mental health, noting that at least 40% of Latin and Hispanic mothers will experience some sort of mental health disorder, like postpartum depression. She asked the panelists about the factors that fuel disparities that prevent those moms from getting care.

Duran said it starts with a culture of mental health being taboo, which fosters difficulty in asking for help.

"I had a traumatic birth. I have twins and had to have an emergency C-section. So a lot of that really increased my risk of having a perinatal mood and anxiety disorder," Duran said. "And a lot of the things that folks can do is, at least for Latinx families, just understand that this is a sensitive subject. They're using these uniform screeners that are everywhere, not even provided in the language that you can read it in. It's so robotic."

Duran said that when Latin mothers do ask for translations, it's a machine talking to them and not a real person.

"There's so many layers of impersonal attitudes that folks don't feel open to talk about how they're feeling, because it's just another checkbox, another thing, another diagnosis," she said.

Sanchez Lloyd advocated for additional funding for culturally competent staff at hospitals and clinics. She said Spectrum has home visiting programs with 24-hour community health workers where half of the employees identify as Black women, and the other half identify as Latina.

"We really are embracing the idea that the community knows what's best and can work along with our mental health therapist," Sanchez Lloyd said. "We recognize those cultural needs, asking those questions, breaking the myths that exist within our communities and also taboo."

That sometimes comes at a cost, however, because that means paying people well for their lived experiences and what's culturally bringing them to the table. That becomes a question of funding and priorities for health systems, Sanchez Lloyd said.

Roel said that she struggled with numerous mental health issues after her pregnancy, and her story was not unique. She said that women and mothers are often asked to carry the emotional labor for almost every industry and institution, from education down to nursing care, all while being expected to prop themselves up, too.

In that type of society, Roel said it wasn't hard to wonder why Latin women and birthing people have mental health issues. She also called for fathers to step up and seek help for their own mental health struggles and to reflect on the power they have in society to make things better for the mothers of their children.

"We don't always have access to paid leave. We don't have the access to fathers who believe that they should do their part sometimes to help prop us up," Roel said. "We're in a culture war right now, and what I want people to understand is that women and mothers, in this capitalist system, are getting more and more and more extracted and exploited from them in value."

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Ben Solis is the senior reporter for Michigan Advance. Solis has covered state and local government for nearly a decade as a former staff writer with Gongwer News Service and multiple MLive newsrooms. He is an award-winning writer and editor and was a finalist for the Michigan Press Association Richard Milliman Journalist of the Year award in 2022 for his work covering Michigan's independent redistricting process.

One of the workshops at the 2026 Latino Legislative Advocacy Day, hosted in downtown Lansing, Mich. April 30, 2026 | Photo by Ben Solis/Michigan Advance

Protect Immigrant Workers:

The May Day Protests' Common Concern Across Michigan

By Erick Diaz Veliz

In several dozen countries around the world, May 1st is celebrated as International Workers' Day. It commemorates the historic struggle for the eight-hour workday and the broader pursuit of better working conditions for the working class, everywhere, that is, except officially in the United States. This commemoration stems from the Haymarket Massacre in Haymarket Square, Chicago, on May 4, 1886, the culmination of a series of protests that had been ongoing since May 1 in support of striking workers demanding an eight-hour workday. Since then, thousands of people in various cities have taken to the streets to demand better working conditions, including the workers in this country.

Michigan was not the exception.

Demonstrations in Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, and Detroit drew hundreds of people last Friday afternoon. Janitors, nurses, teachers, retirees, anti-Trump protesters, and members of other sectors once again gathered and marched together in unity, under the slogans "Money Out of Politics," "Healthcare for all", "Workers Over Millionaires," and "ICE Out."

"Here we are," said UAW Region 1A Director Mark DePaoli to several hundred who gathered at Roosevelt Park in Detroit. "140 years later, and we're still fighting for the same things. We got the eight-hour workday, but in reality, we still fight that every day in the form of forced overtime, and I know some of us out here got healthcare, but for the overwhelming majority, it's unaffordable and unattainable."

In Grand Rapids, around 250 people called for justice for immigrant workers at the May Day rally in Garfield Park, organized by Movimiento Cosecha. The demonstration was not limited solely to Friday afternoon. Between May 1 and May 3, Movimiento Cosecha organized a series of community events to reaffirm their demands that the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County adopt sanctuary policies, implement an economic boycott, and call for the abolition of ICE.

In dozens of cities across the country, demonstrators also rallied to support workers. Although most of these demonstrations were peaceful, some led to arrests by the police. In California, the San Francisco police arrested 25 people while some protesters filled a roadway at San Francisco International Airport. In New York City and Washington DC demonstrations also received police response.

DePaoli joined the call to defend immigrants and other minorities who have been the target of the Trump administration. "They tell us that the immigrants coming across the border are stealing your job, and they're to blame. The gay couple down the street is the reason your healthcare costs are so high," he said. "Let me tell you something, immigrants aren't stealing our jobs, and gay people don't raise the cost of health care."

The demonstration was initially organized by union labor and organizations such as the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO, the UAW, and others. Elected officials and candidates also attended the Detroit demonstration, mingling with the crowd rather than delivering lengthy speeches. U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib (MichiganD-12), State Sen. Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit), U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens (Michigan D-11), U.S. Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed, State Rep. Dylan Wegela (D-Garden City), and U.S. Rep. Shri Thanedar (Michigan D-13) were among the crowd.

While a billboard in front of the park called for an end to the war against Iranin Thanedar's name, he was met with chants of "Shame" and "Free Palestine" from some protesters while he was chatting and greeting some demonstrators.

Senator Chang took her opportunity to speak to the crowd to bring up the threat faced by immigrant workers who are being arrested by immigration agents either when going out to work, while working as a taxi or delivery worker, or when returning home.

"While families are being ripped apart and children are traumatized by out-of-control immigration enforcement, at the same time, we know that Michigan workers are struggling to make ends meet and are fighting to form a union, and are just trying to get a fair contract."

Eventually, after a long series of speeches, activist groups led the march to the McNamara Federal Building via Michigan Avenue. At the federal complex, there were more speeches calling for the protection of immigrants; they also drew attention to the war agenda pursued by the Trump administration instead of benefiting the working class.

"Americans at home struggle to afford rent, healthcare, and basic necessities," said Noor, an organizer with the Palestinian Youth Movement. "We are told there's no money for housing, healthcare, or education, but somehow there's always enough money to kill our families in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran."

Dr. Seydi Sarr, founder of the African Bureau of Immigration and Social Affairs (ABISA), had her nephew, a young Senegalese asylum seeker, detained in the ICE detention center at Baldwin, Michigan. She noted that solidarity with workers must extend to immigrant workers, as we share the same rights. Sarr further stated that a future general strike, a topic mentioned extensively during the rally, must be carried out to ensure that these demands are heard by those in power.

"We all know that to go to Baldwin, we have to drive three and a half hours," she said. "If you aren't buying food, nor going to school because you are scared, if you are not going to go to work, you certainly aren't going to drive three and a half hours to Baldwin to see a loved one. In a state where a driving license is not a right for every immigrant."

"So there is a lot that we need to address, and we need to address it now," Sarr added.

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Erick Diaz Veliz is a Peruvian reporter based in Lansing, Michigan. He has documents and reports on cultural, social, and political issues in Peru and Michigan as a freelancer. Erick was born in Lima, Peru, and has been living in Lansing since 2018.

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Taxes, Trucks and Teen Spaces Top Gabriela Santiago-Romero's Priority List

By Christine Ferretti for Bridge Detroit – Reprinted with permission

Detroit City Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero is headed to Mackinac Island this month with one ask top of mind:

Tax reform

The city, in recent years, has commissioned studies on the feasibility of creating a local sales tax or a "ticket tax" for local sports and concert venues and arenas. A local tax could diversify Detroit's revenue sources, drawing income from visitors while making the city less reliant on property taxes and state revenue sharing.

"It's a constant, it's a priority," the District 6 Council Member told BridgeDetroit as she gears up for an annual trip to the Mackinac Policy Conference this month. "I deeply believe that we need to tax stadiums."

Santiago-Romero said she's promoting the concept and other revenue-generation strategies to better respond to the everyday needs of Detroiters.

In her Southwest Detroit district, there are many community benefits agreements tied to developments, she said, and "they are not yielding us what we all ultimately want, which is long-term benefits."

The city's downtown is home to numerous sports and concert venues, and Santiago-Romero noted a continued push across the state for tax reforms.

Last fall, a Citizens Research Council of Michigan analysis found an admissions tax on Detroit sports and entertainment venues could raise between $14 million and $47 million annually, depending on the tax rate. The report notes that events "are powerful economic engines," and Detroit is a rare outlier among major cities not tapping into the resource.

In January, CRC released another report studying benefits and risks of local option taxes, which suggest Detroit could raise between $42 million and $71 million by creating a 1% sales tax that would cost households an additional $167 per year.

The reports are among the studies Detroit City Council has commissioned to explore ways to raise new revenue and reduce the property tax burden for residents.

The change, Santiago-Romero concedes, would be a heavy lift, requiring a constitutional amendment, voter support and a determination on which tax to pursue. The Michigan Constitution prevents municipalities from creating their own sales taxes, which are used by cities in other states to generate revenue from hotels, sporting events, concerts and other tourist activities.

Detroit City Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero said she's met with young people in the city to hear more about what they need and want to feel included. Credit: City of Detroit

"It's going to be hard, it's going to be long-term," Santiago-Romero said. "We need to be having those conversations.

"I do believe this is something that the mayor (Mary Sheffield) is going to be pushing for. It's something that I'm asking our lobbyists for support with as well. It's a concentrated effort this time with the administration," Santiago-Romero added. "I do feel hopeful. It also helps that Lansing likes Detroit right now; Michigan likes Detroit right now. Let's take that. We do have a moment. We need to combine all the efforts, all the energy, so that we're able to make those policy changes."

The concepts have seen some support from Sheffield while she served as the council president and during her 2025 mayoral campaign. Sheffield has proposed pursuing tax reforms to reduce the burden on residents, possibly replacing a property tax cut with revenue from new taxes. On Friday, the mayor's spokesman, John Roach, said in an email that while options are being studied, the mayor isn't currently pushing any particular proposal. There would also be "significant community engagement" to get resident feedback on potential options, he said.

Santiago-Romero said that there's "a very real need" and an understanding that "there's money out there that we are not collecting."

Truck drivers have frequently used Lonyo Street as a shortcut, causing concerns among residents, as the area is densely populated with children and has few truck regulations. Credit: Cydni Elledge/Outlier Media

"We're struggling. Detroiters are struggling. People that are working at these stadiums have to work two to three jobs. There's just such a huge need. I also believe that the public would be supportive of this," she said.

Truck traffic and transit

Another area of attention for Santiago-Romero are continued efforts to crack down on commercial truck traffic in neighborhoods after designated routes and truck traffic restrictions went into effect in the fall.

The City Council last month signed off on Sheffield's first fiscal budget for the 2026-27 year. Following the budget adoption, Santiago-Romero touted commitments she helped secure for residents, including a $550,000 allocation for the Detroit Police Department to pilot a truck traffic enforcement unit in her district starting July 1.

"We want to make sure that we completely eliminate as many trucks as possible on our streets," said Santiago-Romero, noting that while the effort is not yet citywide it will soon touch Districts 3, 4 and 7 as well.

In the latest budget plan, Santiago-Romero secured $200,000 toward a water feature in the park at Kemeny Recreation Center, $200,000 to support the city's language access program, including hiring additional staff, and $50,000 for a bike rack pilot program.

She's also resuming work from last term to revamp Detroit's Human Rights Ordinance to ensure there's a clear path to due process in the face of discrimination.

Housing and affordability and safe streets are other areas of focus and – as a resident who does not own a car – transportation is a major area of concern for the council member.

"I use a city vehicle, and when I leave this job, I don't want to pay for a car. I want to be able to ride the bus. I want our transit system to work," she said.

She also has hopes for better enforcement of the language access ordinance she spearheaded that was approved by the council last May.

The law, which requires city departments to provide translation services to residents who have limited English proficiency, was meant to codify an existing practice being carried out by the city's Civil Rights Inclusion and Opportunity Department (CRIO). It also complies with a state law sponsored by state Sen. Stephanie Chang, D-Detroit, that requires state departments to help Michigan residents with limited English proficiency access state services.

Detroit's law requires all public-facing city departments to provide translated documents and interpretation services at the request of residents. There are an estimated 7,655 households that speak a limited amount of English, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The council last year approved a $200,000 budget increase for CRIO to hire additional staff to help implement the language services. But Santiago-Romero said that much of the hiring did not take place. This year, Jade Mathis was appointed to serve as the city's new CRIO director. Sheffield also named Elizabeth Orozco-Vasquez, as the city's new Director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs and Economic Inclusion. The leadership changes inspire confidence, Santiago-Romero said.

Conversations are also taking place, she said, about the capacity of CRIO and the immigrant affairs office and where the language access responsibilities should be housed.

Detroit community organizations protest U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity on Jan. 13, 2026. (Malachi Barrett / BridgeDetroit)

Handling ICE issues

At the onset of her second term in January, Santiago-Romero called for a legal path to ban or limit federal immigration operations in Detroit after an ICE agent fatally shot a woman in Minneapolis.

Santiago-Romero submitted a memo to the council's Legislative Policy Division following the killing of Renee Good, a 37-year-old U.S. citizen and mother of three seeking to define the city's ability to keep federal agents away from "sensitive areas" like clinics, schools, places of worship or city property. She also pressed Detroit police on its relationship with ICE and backed a package of state-level bills that would limit ICE operations in Michigan.

Police Chief Todd Bettison has said that Detroit does not enforce federal immigration laws. DPD will, however, honor a detainer request by ICE if signed by a judge, which allows federal agents to apprehend people who are being held in the Detroit Detention Center for a local offense.

Santiago-Romero told BridgeDetroit Friday that she remains focused on police accountability and ensuring that proper procedures are followed.

"It doesn't matter how many policy things that I do, if we have cops not following it, then it's just going to be frustrating for everyone," she said.

As chair of the council's Public Health and Safety standing committee, she's also been a loud voice on the council for welcoming spaces for Detroit youth.

Santiago-Romero has helped lead the charge for "teen care" amid the rollout of a new free bus service for Detroit students and an influx of young people gathering downtown during a recent warm stretch.

Around the same time, Sheffield unveiled plans for a Youth Advisory Committee to bring together a group of youth for monthly conversations about their needs for safe spaces.

"When I'm talking to young people, they just want safe, cute spaces to be in and be young and have fun and to be with their friends," Santiago-Romero said. "I think we need to invest money into actual third spaces. So how do we do that? I really think that next year for the budget, I would like to see some money invested not just in youth programming, but in the environment that we're building for our young people to be at and to be in."

Christine Ferretti is an award-winning journalist with more than 20 years of reporting and editing experience at one of Michigan's largest daily newspapers. Prior to joining BridgeDetroit, she spent close to a decade heading up Detroit City Hall coverage for The Detroit News. Ferretti earned a bachelor's degree in journalism/public relations from Madonna University. She was a National Press Foundation fellow on public and private pensions and took part in a fellowship program through Michigan State University's Great Lakes Environmental Journalism Training Institute.

Real Talk, Real Growth

By Irma Maribel Andrade | Photos by Brayan Gutierrez

On Thursday, April 30th, roughly a dozen folks gathered for DFO313's third Real Talk at The Brooke on Bagley in Southwest Detroit. This month's topic: Construction from the Lens of Operations.

The series, hosted by DFO313, the social arm of AGI Construction, aims to build capacity for Detroit minority contractors in order to scale and access opportunities across the city. But on this night, the conversation kept returning to a quieter theme: The power of showing vulnerability around money.

"People in these spaces are willing to do the work and help others who want to get into this work," said Tanya Saldivar-Ali, founder of DFO313.

Saldivar-Ali moderated a fireside chat with Diana Goode, Executive Director of OPS+ at TechTown Detroit and Andres Valbuena, Owner of VR Homes. The three discussed

From left, Diana Goode, Andres Valbuena, Tanya Saldivar-Ali and Luis Ali.

how operational discipline – tracking expenses, managing cash flow, and building the right relationships can determine whether a construction business survives or scales.

"Vulnerability is a good thing to lean into – especially in regards to finances," Goode said.

The idea that the built environment and relationships can make an impact in people's lives resonated throughout the fireside chat as panelist Valbuena shared his journey.

"My dad's building plans kept getting rejected, one after another," Valbuena explained. So his dad pushed him to earn his builder's license – a decision that eventually led him to start VR Homes in 2019, rehabbing and building new houses across Detroit.

Five years ago, Detroit began an initiative with the city's Land Bank to rehabilitate the homes by hiring independent contractors to do the work. "The city has so much work. Once I completed the process to get on their builder's list, the work just started coming in," Valbuena added.

Goode and Valbuena met at a session on financial statements hosted by DFO313 ten months ago.

"Going to a Real Talk, I heard things that I was experiencing myself as I was growing my business and trying to survive day by day. I realized I needed to get control over my accounting, to be more intentional with my contacts, and utilize resources and people who were there to help me figure it out," Valbuena said.

Valbuena went on to share how "When we started, we had some seed funding, but we weren't tracking expenses, income, or even creating timelines for our projects. I learned a lot while renovating the first home under city contract. As we are scaling and growing our businesses sometimes it takes a while."

Goode is currently the Executive Director of OPS+ at TechTown Detroit. OPS+ is the administrative "back-office" that supports small businesses, startups, and nonprofits. Previously, she served as the Chief Financial Officer at Techtown where she oversaw programs to help businesses launch. Goode began to notice a trend, and as she said, "By the 10th or 15th time someone was asking me if I knew a good bookkeeper, I realized there was a real need for this kind of knowledge."

Goode reviewed five years of Valbuena's company records, breaking down expenses by category and showing how his gross profit margin had increased while costs held steady. The result: Valbuena increased his bonding capacity from $500,000 to $3.5 million. A credit loan also grew from $100,000 to $500,000.

"I tripled my revenue," said Valbuena. Last year his company's annual revenue grew from $600,000 to upwards of $2 million.

"Events like DFO313's Real Talk have changed my life," he added.

This sentiment was echoed by attendees across the room. As attendees arrived for the conversation, they greeted familiar faces, enjoyed catering from Tacos Wuey, and connected with new folks who are in the construction industry. Despite the industry's reputation as cutthroat and transactional, the room had a notably collaborative energy, with folks networking and connecting beyond just swapping business cards.

Maxwell Rodriguez from Hamtramck, MI attended DFO's March Real Talk on affordable housing. "That was the first one we went to- and that sold us. We had to come back and check it out," Rodriguez said. "All the speakers had really great stories, lots of experience, and helped to break things down that as a builder and carpenter I'm trying to learn more about."

Rodriguez has been a carpenter for 10 years, focusing on custom work like cabinetry and built-ins, and is now moving into home renovations and layout changes. All of his work is in Detroit or Hamtramck. When asked what brought him to this month's Real Talk Rodriguez said, "I'm trying to go all the way to the top! As high as I can go with this."

"I don't just want to be the carpenter, or the project manager. Coming to the first Real Talk made me realize just how much I don't know. The speakers at these events have been through a lot to get their projects going. I'm learning about everything from insurance and time management, to contract development -- it's a lot to navigate on your own," Rodriguez said.

These Real Talk sessions provide a chance to meet people with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. Many of the attendees echoed the sentiment of "learning from others' experiences" and taking new terminology or considerations into account as they grow and scale their businesses.

It was Chauny Sailor's first time visiting the Brooke on Bagley, but it was not her first Real Talk. "These sessions always are what it says -- real talk. It is always an opportunity to learn and grow," Chauny said. Sailor owns Always Impact LLC, providing general contractor and project management services for residential and small-scale commercial projects. With twenty years in real estate, Sailor has evolved from agent to investor, broker, and now construction. Equipped with her builder's license, her ultimate goal is to build single family communities.

"Operations are integral to business," Sailor said. "Without operations, there is no business, and it's necessary to scale."

"Operations are the backbone to your success. You don't have to do it alone. There are resources here to help you," Salivar-Ali emphasized.

One of those resources highlighted was TechTown's Ask an Expert program, which offers a free 25- minute consultation to help you take your business to the next level.

Maria White with Azimuth North Enterprises was among those in attendance who is looking to make the move from the informal building sector to the formal. "Todos los inmigrantes a veces no entendemos, o no le damos importancia al profesionalizarnos porque sabemos hacer el trabajo con las manos. Pero es importante tener las licencias, saber los códigos, y hacer las cosas a lo formal y legal, [Many immigrants sometimes don't understand, or we don't give it the importance to professionalize ourselves because we know how to do the work with our hands. But it is important to have the licenses, know the codes, and to do things the legal and formal way]" White said.

Originally from Guatemala, White emphasized in Spanish how important coming to these events are for her despite not being a fluent English speaker. "Me cuesta entender a veces,

Presenters and attendees at the Real Talk event hosted by The Brooke on Bagley in front of the mural painted by Elton Monroy Duran.

pero aunque me pierda, algo agarro y ya investigo bien en mi casa. [Sometimes I struggle to understand, but even if I don't understand it all, I learn something and then I go and investigate more at home]", she added.

Valbuena put it more directly: "Connecting to good counsel and building those relationships makes a huge difference when you are growing and scaling your business."

Irma Maribel Andrade is a born and raised Detroiter, she is passionate about "lifting others as you climb". She is a community-centered cultural heritage professional, and the daughter of immigrants from San Luis Potosi. When she is not working, Irma spends her time gardening, being a wife & mom of three.

This article and photos were made possible thanks to a generous grant to EL CENTRAL Hispanic News by Press Forward, the national movement to strengthen communities by reinvigorating local news. Learn more at www.pressforward.news.

¿Le duele el cuello y la espalda? Trinity Health tiene los últimos métodos y tecnologías para ayudarle. Nuestro equipo busca muchas opciones para crear el plan de tratamiento justo para usted. Desde terapia ocupacional y manejo del dolor hasta cirugías de columna avanzadas, despídase de la vida con dolor. Comuníquese con el programa de columna de Trinity Health hoy y vuelva a disfrutar sus actividades diarias.

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TrinityHealthMI.org/Spine

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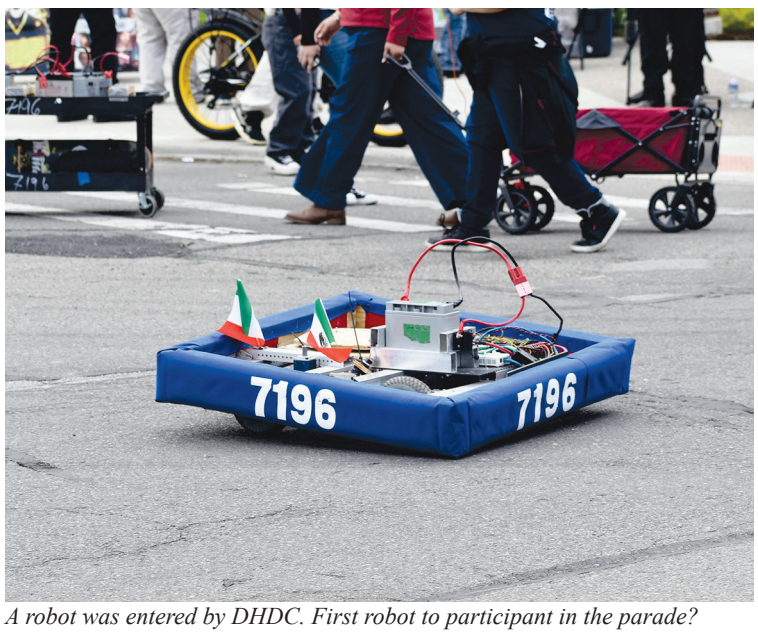
Cinco de Mayo 2026

Thousands of Detroiters watch the 61st annual Cinco de Mayo parade in Southwest Detroit



A robot was entered by DHDC. First robot to participant in the parade?

A lucha libre wrestler high-fives spectators.

Detroit Drum & Dance play music from atop their float.

Photos by Adam J. Dewey, Luciana Vega and Bill Deuparo

The Congress of Communities - Southwest Detroit float sports flags from around Latin America.

Lowrider cars and bicycles ride alongside one another.

Jesse Gonzales, Sr. served as Grand Marshall

A parade participant dressed in Aztec-style clothing plays a jaguar Aztec death whistle.

DCFC defeats Louisville City FC 2-1

EL CENTRAL
HISPANIC NEWS
SPORTS

Sports Editor: Dan Graschuck/ EL CENTRAL

Story by Dan Graschuck/ EL CENTRAl, and photos by Adam J. Dewey/ EL CENTRAL

Detroit City FC takes down the first place team in the USL Eastern Conference, Louisville City FC 2-1 at Keyworth Stadium on May 2, 2026.

For more information about the game please see David Levine's story on page 11

Photos below are highlights from DCFC vs. Louisville City

Detroit City FC goalie Carlos Herrera warms up before kickoff

Darren Smith (#7) takes a shot on goal

Detroit City FC hosted various mascots to play soccer with kids during halftime

Connor Rutz celebrates his goal in the 71st minute to give Detroit City FC a 2-1 advantage

Kobe Hernandez-Foster (#22) drives the ball across midfield

Detroit City FC supporters celebrate DCFC's 2-1 victory over Louisville City FC, the first place team in the USL Eastern Conference

City Downs Louisville

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS SPORTS

Pateando la No. 5

David Levine
EL CENTRAL

Connor Rutz became the latest DCFC hero with a match-winning goal against Louisville City last weekend. Detroit City had ended Louisville's hopes of winning both the regular season and the playoffs last year on a Devon Amoo-Mensah header against the run of play. This year, Louisville took their usual spot on top of the Eastern Conference into Saturday's nationally televised showdown. Once again, DCFC proved to be up to the task.

This time, DCFC played their rivals straight up. Instead of sitting back and looking for a single chance to win like in the playoffs, Danny Dichio's team took the fight to the visitors. Backed by 6,110 fans on a chilly day at Keyworth, they had plenty of inspiration. If the support wasn't enough, forward Ben Morris finally returned to active duty after nearly eleven months out and Maxi Rodriguez appeared on the substitutes' bench, giving the team more depth than in recent weeks.

Amoo-Mensah made the first crucial intervention after 18 minutes. Carlos Herrera charged out of the penalty area to head the ball, but didn't get enough purchase on his attempt. The captain continued his defensive run and covered the goal just in time to clear a lob from Jansen Wilson. That inspired a push from the home team. Tommy Silva and Chisum Egbuchulam had their attempts blocked. Egbuchulam, in his first start, made a nuisance of himself to the Louisville defenders. He was quick to the ball and pressed defenders.

Leading goal scorer Darren Smith had his chances, too. A Louisville defender cleared a Smith attempt off the line just past the 30 minute mark when City played a quick free kick and Silva's cross found the South African cutting across the penalty area. It looked like a goal was coming, and eight minutes later, the goal finally arrived. Jeciel Cedeno split the Louisville defense wide open with a terrific diagonal ball to Ates Diouf on the left. He cut inside and fired his shot off the far post. The rebound fell perfectly for Haruki Yamazaki. Yamazaki fired a shot across the front of the goal that looked to be going wide. It probably would have missed but for the clumsy clearance attempt to clear by Carlos Moguel. He only managed to turn the ball into his own goal, giving DCFC the lead.

Unfortunately, DCFC couldn't hold the lead until halftime. A soft foul call against Abdoulaye Diop at the top of the penalty arc gave Jansen Wilson a dangerous shooting opportunity. The DCFC wall broke too early and Wilson's shot bent into the side-netting. The DCFC fans and players felt hard done by on that foul call and expressed their opinions as the teams left the field.

The same back and forth rhythm of play resumed in the second half. Both teams created chances. Cedeno had two shots at goal ten minutes into the second half, but injured himself on the second attempt. He limped off in favor of Connor Rutz and was later seen with crutches. Both teams made changes, trying to claim the points in a tight game.

Rutz found the winner from a corner with 20 minutes to play. Diouf lined it up on the DCFC left and Rutz made a bending run around to the far post. Diouf's corner met him perfectly and Rutz fired his header into the goal, setting off loud, smoky celebrations around the ground. All that remained was to defend the lead. Maxi Rodriguez and Ben Morris came on to do just that. Morris looked understandably rusty after such a long absence, but received warm applause from the home fans anyway.

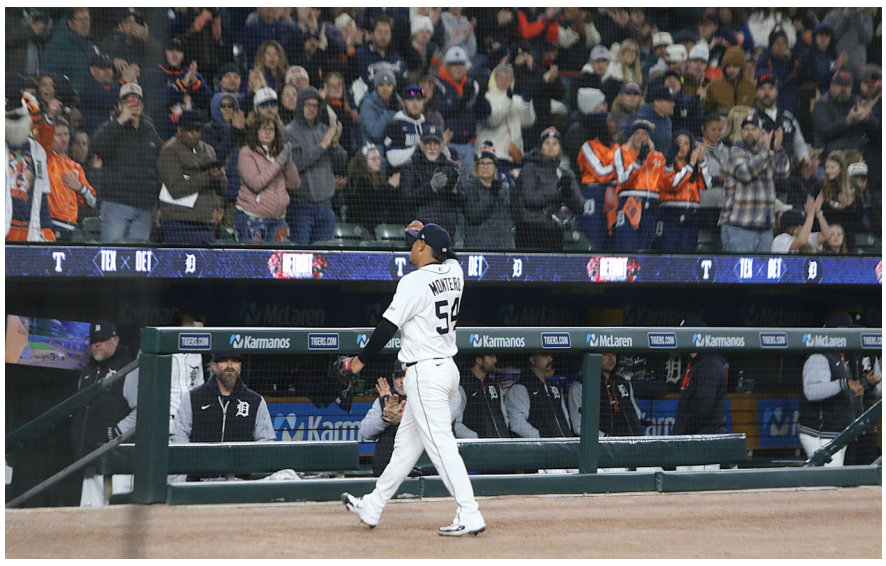
Defending the lead looked like it was going smoothly until the last few minutes of normal time. Louisville's big defender Kyle Adams crashed into DCFC's tower of strength Callum Montgomery. Montgomery got the worst of the collision and had to be taken off under the league's concussion protocol. Rio Hope-Gund came in for Montgomery and ended up making the defensive play of the game in the tenth minutes of stoppage time when he cleared a shot off the goal line with Herrera beaten.

The narrow 2-1 win didn't move DCFC up the table, but it did serve to reel in Louisville City. The Tampa Bay Rowdies jumped over Louisville to take the top spot by a point. DCFC is level with Charleston four points behind the new Eastern Conference leaders. Le Rouge will travel to Hartford this weekend, knowing that the tightly packed Eastern Conference doesn't give them the option of giving any games away. The return of Ben Morris and Maxi Rodriguez helps immensely. They need healthy bodies, especially with Cedeno and Montgomery looking at potentially lengthy absences. What would really help is the return of Michael Bryant and Rhys Williams. With Montgomery out, Bryant's experience in the DCFC system would be invaluable.

May 1-3, 2026 - Comerica Park - Detroit Tigers vs. Texas Rangers

Story and photos by Mike Alberts/ EL CENTRAL

The Tigers won two out of the three night games played in cold weather. The Tigers will have played 11 consecutive night games by May 11.
Standout performance of the series was by the young Tiger starting pitcher Kieder Montero, holding the Rangers to one run, pitching 6.2 Innings in 85 pitches.
Dillon Dingler provided the Tigers with a massive 3-run homer on Saturday.
The Tigers finish the weekend series with a 12-3 home record and an overall record of 18-17.
The Detroit Tigers will be without Tarik Skubal for about 2-3 months, due to getting surgery on his left elbow to remove "loose bodies" per the medical report.



Kieder Montero receives standing ovation from fans, as pitching 6.2 innings with 85 pitches and holding the Rangers to only one run

Rilely Greene hitting against the Rangers

Tigers celebrating victory over Rangers

Spencer Torkelson hitting against the Rangers

LULAC Condemns Supreme Court Ruling in Louisiana v. Callais As a "Day of Shame" for American Democracy

WASHINGTON, D.C. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, has condemned the U.S. Supreme Court's 6-3 decision in Louisiana v. Callais, which strikes down Louisiana's congressional map and eviscerates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

As Justice Kagan wrote in dissent, [this] decision renders Section 2 "all but a dead letter" in the vast majority of cases. While the majority claims to have preserved the law, in practice it has made partisan goals a wholesale defense for racism, handing state legislatures across the country a green light to dismantle fair districts and silence voters of color without meaningful federal court review.

LULAC stands in solidarity with the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), the ACLU, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and our civil rights partners. As LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson stated today, the Court has "reversed decades of progress toward a multiracial democracy in the name of partisan politics," rendering protections that have served the country for more than 60 years "null and void."

Statement from Roman Palomares, LULAC National President and Chairman of the Board:

"The Voting Rights Act is the crown jewel of the Civil Rights Movement. People fought, bled, and died for these protections, and today the Supreme Court has whisked those sacrifices away with the wave of a hand. For 60 years, the VRA has been the promise this country made to my generation and the generations that came before, that no matter the color of your skin or the language you speak at home, your vote counts the same as anyone else's. This Court has broken that promise. LULAC has fought for the dignity and political voice of Latino Americans for 96 years, and we will fight for 96 more if we must. Democracy will not fall on our watch."

Statement from Juan Proaño, LULAC Chief Executive Officer:

"Let us be clear about what happened today: six justices of the United States Supreme Court chose to strip Latino, Black, Native, and Asian American voters of the most powerful tool we had to defend ourselves against discrimination at the ballot box. They did it knowing exactly what comes next.

They did it knowing that Texas will move to crack the Rio Grande Valley. They did it knowing that Florida will move against Black and Puerto Rican communities. They did it knowing that cities and counties across this country will revert to the at-large schemes and racial gerrymanders that Section 2 was written to dismantle. This is not judicial restraint. This is not colorblindness. This is a deliberate decision to weaken the political power of 70 million Black and Latino eligible voters in a nation that grows more diverse every single day. Politicians should not choose their voters, voters should choose their politicians. Latinos are 14.7% of the American electorate. We are not going away, we are not going to be silenced, and we are not going to be written out of American democracy by judicial fiat. The Court has chosen its legacy today. We will choose ours."

The Stakes for Latino and Minority Communities

The ruling imperils decades of progress for the 36.2 million Latino eligible voters and tens of millions of Black, Native, and Asian American voters who have relied on Section 2 to challenge discriminatory maps and election systems. Civil rights analysts project as many as 19 minority-held congressional seats are at risk of elimination, including roughly 11% of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and up to 30% of the Congressional Black Caucus. The greatest damage will be felt at the local level, where two-thirds of historic Section 2 litigation has occurred. Cities, counties, and school boards may now revert to the at-large schemes that Section 2 dismantled in jurisdictions from Pasadena, Texas to communities across the Deep South and Southwest.

In the words of Justice Thurgood Marshall, this is our democracy. We must make it, protect it, and pass it on.

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EDITORIAL OPINION

Guest Opinion:

The AI Job Apocalypse Is Already Happening And What Democrats Should Pledge to Do About it

By Robert Reich

How can the stock market be rising to record levels while jobs and wages are going nowhere, most Americans are paying higher prices for just about everything, and consumer sentiment is in the dumps?

Answer: Stock prices reflect corporate profits, which have risen to record levels. And corporate profits are soaring for two big reasons:

1. Corporations have more monopoly power than ever. This means they can raise prices without worrying that competitors will grab away consumers by underpricing them.

This is also a reason why wages are going nowhere. Workers have fewer competing companies to work for. Plus, more corporations are requiring their workers to sign so-called "noncompete agreements" so they can't work for a competitor even if they found one. Researchers estimate that 38 percent of workers are now subject to such noncompete agreements at some point — not just for white-collar but increasingly for blue-collar jobs.

2. Corporations are using artificial intelligence (AI) — and the anticipation of AI — to slash jobs and wages.

Wages are around two-thirds of the typical corporation's total costs. So a key way to increase profits is to cut total payroll costs by reducing the number of workers and keeping down the pay of those who remain.

AI is rapidly becoming central to this. Regardless of whether AI can substitute for all these jobs, corporations are behaving as if it can — and Wall Street is rewarding corporations that are slashing jobs in anticipation of AI.

The U.S. job market is already experiencing a wave of mass layoffs. So far, in the first four months of 2026, big corporations have cut over 128,000 jobs.

Meta is laying off 8,000 employees as it shifts toward AI. Meta's shares have risen briskly since the start of the year. Amazon has cut 30,000 jobs, many of them replaced by AI, while racking up record profits. The six biggest Wall Street banks are cutting 15,000 jobs and showing profits 18 percent higher than last year's. They're crediting AI.

Oracle is cutting thousands of jobs and gaining over $6 billion in profits as part of its AI push. Its expected layoffs could total 20,000 to 30,000. UPS is planning to cut up to 30,000 jobs this year.

Dow, the chemical maker, has announced cuts of about 4,500 jobs, leveraging AI and automation. Block, Inc. (Square/Cash App) is cutting nearly 40 percent of its workforce, or roughly 4,000 jobs, in an AI-driven restructuring.

So, the answer to how the stock market can be rising to record levels — when jobs and wages are going nowhere and most Americans are paying more for goods and services — is that it's hitting records because jobs and wages are going nowhere, and most people are paying more for goods and services.

Monopoly power (including noncompete clauses) and AI are creating one of the largest redistributions in history — from workers to the owners of capital (top executives and investors).

Meanwhile — and for much the same reason — consumer sentiment hit a record low in April, dragged down by worries about the Iran war, gas prices, and job risks from AI. Today's perception of the economy is darker than during any previous crisis since the University of Michigan started tracking sentiment more than 50 years ago,

3. A final crucial point: Wealthier Americans keep spending (the richest 10 percent now account for almost half of all spending; three decades ago, they accounted for 36 percent), while most everyone else is strapped. The people really taking it on the chin are the bottom half. Not only are they losing jobs and wages but the Trump regime is cutting the federal assistance they rely on.

Because of Trump and congressional Republicans' refusal to extend subsidies under the Affordable Care Act, ACA enrollments are declining about 20 percent — from 24 million people who were covered last year to around 19 million now. Larger losses are forecast by the end of the year.

In addition, Trump's work requirements for Medicaid are making it harder for many of the nation's low-income people to qualify because they can't get work.

More Americans are losing food assistance under SNAP. And the Trump regime's proposed rule to impose harsh work requirements and time limits on people receiving rental assistance will put an estimated 3.7 million people — more than half of them children — at risk of losing housing.

*****

How should Democrats respond to all this? At least, pledge to:

(1) Break up monopolies through major antitrust enforcement.

(2) Regulate AI so corporations using it cannot engage in mass layoffs but are only permitted to downsize by a small percentage (3 percent?) of their workforce per year.

(3) Establish Medicare for all.

(4) Institute a Universal Basic Income financed by higher taxes on those at the top, so all families have at least a subsistence wage.

Will Trump take these steps? Of course not. Will Democrats demand them and pledge to take these steps if elected? I hope so.

Opinions in this column are not necessarily those of the Publisher or Editor

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Opinión de un Invitado:

El apocalipsis laboral de la IA ya está ocurriendo Y lo que los demócratas deberían comprometerse a hacer al respect

Por Robert Reich

¿Cómo es posible que el mercado de valores esté alcanzando niveles récord mientras que el empleo y los salarios se encuentran estancados, la mayoría de los estadounidenses pagan precios más altos por casi todo y la confianza del consumidor está por los suelos?

Respuesta: Los precios de las acciones reflejan los beneficios empresariales, los cuales han ascendido a niveles récord. Y estos beneficios se están disparando por dos razones principales:

1. Las corporaciones poseen más poder de monopolio que nunca. Esto significa que pueden aumentar los precios sin la preocupación de que sus competidores les arrebaten a los consumidores ofreciendo precios más bajos.

Esta es también una de las razones por las que los salarios no avanzan. Los trabajadores disponen de menos empresas competidoras para las que trabajar. Además, cada vez más corporaciones exigen a sus empleados que firmen los llamados «acuerdos de no competencia», impidiéndoles así trabajar para un competidor, incluso si lograran encontrar uno. Los investigadores estiman que, actualmente, el 38 por ciento de los trabajadores están sujetos a este tipo de acuerdos de no competencia en algún momento de su carrera; una práctica que ya no se limita únicamente a los empleos de oficina (cuello blanco), sino que se extiende cada vez más a los trabajos manuales (cuello azul).

2. Las corporaciones están utilizando la inteligencia artificial (IA) — así como la expectativa ante su implementación— para recortar empleos y salarios.

Los salarios representan alrededor de dos tercios de los costos totales de una corporación típica. Por lo tanto, una forma clave de aumentar los beneficios es recortar los costos totales de la nómina, reduciendo el número de trabajadores y manteniendo bajos los sueldos de aquellos que permanecen en la empresa.

La IA se está convirtiendo rápidamente en un elemento central de este proceso. Independientemente de si la IA puede o no sustituir todos estos empleos, las corporaciones se están comportando como si pudiera hacerlo, y Wall Street está recompensando a aquellas empresas que están eliminando puestos de trabajo en previsión del impacto de la IA.

El mercado laboral estadounidense ya está experimentando una oleada de despidos masivos. En lo que va del año —durante los primeros cuatro meses de 2026—, las grandes corporaciones han recortado más de 128.000 empleos.

Meta está despidiendo a 8.000 empleados a medida que orienta su estrategia hacia la IA. Las acciones de Meta han repuntado con fuerza desde principios de año. Amazon ha eliminado 30.000 puestos de trabajo —muchos de los cuales han sido reemplazados por la IA—, al tiempo que ha registrado beneficios récord. Los seis bancos más grandes de Wall Street están recortando 15.000 empleos y reportando beneficios un 18 por ciento superiores a los del año anterior; un logro que atribuyen a la IA.

Oracle está eliminando miles de puestos de trabajo y generando más de 6.000 millones de dólares en beneficios como parte de su apuesta por la IA. Se estima que sus despidos podrían sumar entre 20.000 y 30.000 personas. UPS tiene previsto recortar hasta 30.000 empleos este año.

Dow, la compañía química, ha anunciado recortes de unos 4.500 puestos de trabajo, apoyándose en la IA y la automatización. Block, Inc. (Square/Cash App) está recortando cerca del 40 por ciento de su plantilla —aproximadamente 4.000 empleos— como parte de una reestructuración impulsada por la IA.

Por consiguiente, la respuesta a la pregunta de cómo es posible que el mercado de valores esté alcanzando niveles récord — precisamente cuando el empleo y los salarios están estancados y la mayoría de los estadounidenses pagan cada vez más por bienes y servicios— reside en el hecho de que está batiendo récords *porque* el empleo y los salarios están estancados, y *porque* la mayoría de la gente está pagando más por bienes y servicios.

El poder monopolístico (incluidas las cláusulas de no competencia) y la IA están propiciando una de las mayores redistribuciones de la historia: una transferencia de riqueza desde los trabajadores hacia los propietarios del capital (es decir, los altos ejecutivos y los inversores). Mientras tanto —y por razones muy similares— la confianza del consumidor alcanzó un mínimo histórico en abril, lastrada por las preocupaciones sobre la guerra con Irán, los precios de la gasolina y los riesgos laborales derivados de la inteligencia artificial (IA). La percepción actual de la economía es más sombría que durante cualquier crisis anterior desde que la Universidad de Michigan comenzó a monitorear la confianza hace más de 50 años.

3. Un último punto crucial: los estadounidenses más adinerados siguen gastando (el 10 por ciento más rico representa ahora casi la mitad de todo el gasto; hace tres décadas, representaba el 36 por ciento), mientras que la gran mayoría del resto de la población se encuentra con el agua al cuello. Quienes realmente están recibiendo el golpe más duro son los pertenecientes a la mitad inferior de la escala socioeconómica. No solo están perdiendo empleos y salarios, sino que el régimen de Trump está recortando la asistencia federal de la que dependen.

Debido a la negativa de Trump y de los republicanos del Congreso a prorrogar los subsidios contemplados en la Ley de Cuidado de Salud Asequible (ACA, por sus siglas en inglés), las inscripciones en la ACA están disminuyendo en aproximadamente un 20 por ciento: de los 24 millones de personas que contaban con cobertura el año pasado, se ha pasado a unos 19 millones en la actualidad. Se prevén pérdidas aún mayores para finales de año.

Además, los requisitos laborales impuestos por Trump para acceder a Medicaid están dificultando que muchas de las personas de bajos ingresos del país puedan calificar para el programa, dado que no logran conseguir empleo.

Cada vez más estadounidenses están perdiendo la asistencia alimentaria que reciben a través del programa SNAP. Asimismo, la norma propuesta por el régimen de Trump —que busca imponer estrictos requisitos laborales y límites de tiempo a las personas que reciben asistencia para el alquiler— pondrá en riesgo de perder su vivienda a un número estimado de 3,7 millones de personas; más de la mitad de ellas, niños.

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Special World's Cultures

Ecuador

Matilde Hidalgo Navarro: The First Woman to Vote in Latin America

The fight for women's right to vote in Latin America began in the early 20th century, driven by courageous activists across the region. Figures like Paulina Luisi in Uruguay, Bertha Lutz in Brazil, and Elvia Carrillo Puerto in Mexico pushed for change in their countries. But it was Matilde Hidalgo Navarro of Ecuador who made history by becoming the first woman to cast a vote in a democratic election in Latin America.

Matilde was born on September 25, 1889, in Loja, Ecuador. She was the youngest of six children. After her father passed away when she was still very young, her mother took on the responsibility of raising the family and ensuring her children received an education—something that would deeply shape Matilde's path.

From an early age, Matilde showed determination and a desire to learn. After finishing primary school, she asked to continue her studies—something that was not common for women at the time. After a month of hesitation, the school's director finally agreed. Years later, on October 8, 1913, she became the first woman in Ecuador to graduate from high school.

Her journey was anything but easy. Many families discouraged their daughters from associating with her, fearing her example. Still, Matilde refused to give up. When she was denied entry to the Central University of Ecuador's medical school, she looked for another path and moved to Cuenca, where she was accepted. She went on to complete her medical degree and later earned a doctorate in 1921 with outstanding merit.

In 1923, she married lawyer Fernando Procel, and together they had two children. Just a year later, on May 10, 1924, Matilde achieved what no woman in Latin America had done before: she voted in a democratic election, exercising a right that many believed women should not have.

Her contributions didn't stop there. In 1941, she became the first woman in Ecuador to run for public office and was elected as an alternate deputy in Loja, marking another milestone for women in public life. Alongside her political achievements, she continued practicing medicine in Guayaquil until 1949, when she received a scholarship to further specialize in pediatrics, neurology, and dietetics in Argentina.

When she returned to Ecuador, she dedicated much of her life to social causes. She served as Vice President of the Ecuadorian House of Culture and became the honorary lifetime president of the Red Cross in El Oro. Over the years, she received several honors, including recognition for her contributions to public health.

Matilde Hidalgo Navarro passed away on February 20, 1974. Her legacy lives on as a symbol of courage, perseverance, and the power of challenging what once seemed impossible.

Roberto Ayón B.

Baños de Agua Santa

Baños de Agua Santa, often just called Baños, is a small city in Ecuador's Tungurahua province and one of the country's most beloved travel destinations. It's located about 45 minutes from Ambato and, although it has a population of around 13,000 people, it welcomes visitors from all over the world.

The town sits on the slopes of the Tungurahua volcano, about 1,820 meters above sea level, and very close to the geographic center of Ecuador. Its setting is part of what makes it so special: lush mountains, waterfalls, and easy access to Sangay and Llanganates National Parks. The weather is generally mild and pleasant throughout the year, even though it can be quite humid.

Baños is also known as a place of faith and tradition. Many people visit not only for its natural beauty but also for its thermal springs, which are widely believed to have healing, even "miraculous," properties.

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ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO,
by Mariana Ayón RV

Train: The Devil Nose

The Devil's Nose Train is the name given to a scenic railway journey that cuts through the breathtaking landscapes of the Andes Mountains, connecting the towns of Alausí and Sibambe. The route follows a series of sharp zigzags, making it one of the most challenging railway tracks in the world.

The most dramatic part of the journey is a rocky outcrop known as the Devil's Nose. Here, the train descends 80 meters down what feels like an almost vertical slope, a remarkable feat of engineering that continues to impress visitors.

The journey begins in Alausí, a charming town known for its narrow cobblestone streets, flower-filled balconies, and picturesque 19th-century adobe houses. From there, the round-trip excursion takes about two and a half hours, including a stop in Sibambe. While there, visitors can enjoy traditional cuisine from Ecuador's highlands or explore a small local museum.

Receta: Bolón Verde

Ingredients:

Green plantains, peeled
Butter
Egg
Oil
Grated cheese
Cooked chorizo
Chili pepper or ground chili
Cumin
Salt

Preparation:

Start by peeling and cutting the plantains, then fry them over medium-high heat until they're nicely golden, soft on the inside, not crunchy. Once they're ready, mash them into a smooth mixture.

Add the egg, a bit of chili, cumin, and salt, and mix everything together with your hands until you get a soft but firm dough.

Next, shape the dough into balls about the size of your fist. Gently press your thumb into each one to create a small opening, then fill it with grated cheese, chorizo, or your preferred filling. Close it up carefully, pressing the dough so it holds together.

You can serve them just like that, or fry them again quickly over high heat to give them a crisp, golden outside. Let them rest on paper towels to remove any excess oil. They're usually served with fried eggs—and they're incredibly comforting.

ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO

Ecuador

Matilde Hidalgo Navarro: Primera mujer en votar en américa latina

Los movimientos por el voto femenino en América Latina, se había iniciado en los primeros años del siglo XX, fueron muchos los países donde activistas sociales, libraban fuertes batallas para que se aprobara en una Constitución, ejemplos tenemos con Paulina Luisi de Uruguay, Bertha Lutz de Brasil, Elvia Carrillo Puerto de México, pero muy específicamente Matilde Hidalgo Navarro de Ecuador, quién logró ser la primera mujer en votar en una elección democrática en este Continente. Matilde, nació el 25 de septiembre de 1889 en la ciudad de Loja, Ecuador, hija del comerciante Zarumeño, Juan Manuel Hidalgo y la venezolana Carmen Navarro, su padre murió siendo ella una niña, así que su madre se dedicó a trabajar para sostener a su familia y dar estudio a sus seis hijos, Matilde fue la menor de ellos. Al concluir sus estudios de primaria, solicitó su ingreso a la secundaria y preparatoria, el director después de pensarlo durante un mes, dio finalmente su aprobación, convirtiéndose años después, el 8 de octubre de 1913, en la primera mujer que lograba graduarse de bachiller en Ecuador. No fue un camino fácil, las familias prohibieron a sus hijas cualquier tipo de amistad con ella, no obstante, continuó sus estudios de licenciatura, primero le negaron su ingreso en la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad Central de Ecuador, sin darse por vencida, viajó a Cuenca, donde fue aceptado su ingreso, y al concluir sus estudios profesionales, solicitó su inscripción para estudiar un doctorado siendo en noviembre de 1921, que lo obtuvo con mucho mérito. Dos años después (1923) se casó con el abogado Fernando Procel con quien procreó dos hijos. Un año después, el 10 de mayo de 1924, Matilde Hidalgo se convirtió en la primera mujer en América Latina que ejerció el derecho constitucional a votar en una elección. En 1941 se convirtió en la primera mujer candidata a un cargo de elección popular en el Ecuador y la primera mujer elegida administradora pública en Loja con el cargo de Diputada Suplente. Ejerció la medicina en Guayaquil hasta 1949, cuando obtuvo una beca para realizar una especialización en pediatría, neurología y dietética en Argentina. A su regreso al Ecuador, se dedicó a desarrollar obras sociales, fue nombrada Vicepresidenta de la Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana y fue presidenta de honor y vitalicia de la Cruz Roja en El Oro. También recibió múltiples reconocimientos como la condecoración con el Mérito de Salud Pública. Falleció el 20 de febrero de 1974.

Roberto Ayón B.

Baños de Agua Santa

Baños de Agua Santa o simplemente Baños es una ciudad ecuatoriana, de la Provincia de Tungurahua. Es un centro turístico de importancia del país, se encuentra a unos 45 minutos de Ambato. Es la cabecera cantonal del cantón Baños y tiene una población de 12,995 personas. La actividad económica más importante del cantón es el turismo receptivo. Baños, está ubicada en las faldas del volcán Tungurahua una altura de 1,820 metros (msnm), muy próximo al centro geométrico del territorio ecuatoriano. Goza de clima muy agradable, casi durante todo el año; a pesar de una alta humedad. Los parques nacionales Sangay y Llanganates. están ubicados en los flancos del cantón. Baños es también un centro de peregrinación religiosa ya que los manantiales de aguas termales son popularmente asociados con curas "milagrosas".

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EL CENTRAL
Hispanic News

Tren Nariz del Diablo

Recorrido en tren que atraviesa los paisajes de la Cordillera de los Andes, uniendo los poblados de Alausí y Sibambe a través de zigzagueantes caminos que conforman una de las rutas más complejas del mundo. Su punto más álgido lo conforma la colina apodada la Nariz del Diablo, lugar en el cual los rieles del tren descienden 80 metros prácticamente en forma vertical, gracias a una impresionante obra de ingeniería.

Su punto de inicio corresponde a Alausí, un poblado que no deja de encantar por sus estrechas calles empedradas, balcones con flores y pintorescas casonas de adobe del siglo XIX. Desde ahí la excursión ida y vuelta dura aproximadamente 2 horas y media, parando por un tiempo en el poblado de Sibambe, lugar donde se puede disfrutar de la gastronomía típica de la sierra ecuatoriana o visitar su pequeño museo.

Receta: Bolón Verde

Ingredientes:

Plátanos verdes pelados
Mantequilla
Huevo
Aceite
Queso rayado
Chorizo cocido
Pimiento picante o chile molido
Comino
Sal

Preparación:

Se pelan, se cortan los plátanos y se fríen a temperatura media – alta; hasta que estén dorados mas no crujientes.

Se hace un puré con los plátanos, y se le agrega el huevo, el pimiento picante, comino y sal.

Se mezcla con las manos hasta conseguir una masa estable.

Se forman bolas del tamaño de un puño y se le abre un hueco, que se rellena con queso rallado, chorizo o carne.

Se tapa bien el hueco presionando la masa para que quede compacta.

Se pueden servir así, o se pueden volver a freír a temperatura alta para que se doren rápido. Se colocan en papel absorbente para que destilen el aceite. Generalmente se acompañan con huevos fritos.

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